

**REMARKS**

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1, 6, 7, 11, and 17, cancel claims 2, 6, 12, and 16, and add claim 22. Thus, claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, 11, 13-15, and 17-22 are pending in this application. Applicants respectfully request prompt allowance of the pending claims at least in light of the following remarks.

Applicants respectfully assert that entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance by incorporating allowable subject matter in to the rejected claims and presenting an additional claim containing subject matter indicated allowable by the Office Action; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration, since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution, i.e., distinguishing the prior art based on at least the configuration of the claimed threading hook; (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action by incorporating/adding subject matter identified as allowable; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are based on suggestions made in the final rejection.

Applicants thus respectfully request entry of the amendments.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Office Action's indication that claims 6, 7, and 16-17 recite allowable subject matter and that claims 18-21 are allowed. Applicants thus amend claims 1 and 11 to incorporate allowable claims 6 and 16 and intervening claims 2 and 12, respectively. Accordingly, claims 1 and 11 are allowable.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3-5, 7-10, 13-15, and 17 are allowable for at least the reasons that claims 1-11 are allowable, as well as for the additional features they recite.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 and 8-15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent 3,250,447 to Larew. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As discussed above, claims 2 and 12 are canceled. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 2 and 12 is inconsistent with the pending claims. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2 and 12.

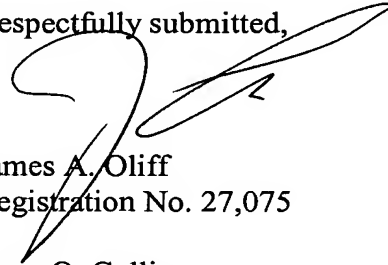
Further, as discussed above, claims 1, 3-5, 8-11, and 13-15 are allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3-5, 8-11, and 13-15.

By this Amendment Applicants add allowable claim 22. In the "Reply to Arguments" section, the Office Action properly recognizes that Larew does not disclose, teach, or suggest the order in which the disclosed invention passes the threading hook through the eye of the needle, engages the thread, and withdraws from the eye of the needle such that the thread passes through the eye of the needle. Applicants incorporate the above-identified allowable feature into the features recited in previously pending claim 1, as new claim 22. Accordingly, as already identified by the Office Action, claim 22 is allowable and will not require further search or consideration.

In view of at least the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Applicants earnestly solicit favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, 11, 13-15, and 17-22.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: April 11, 2005

Attachment:  
Amendment Transmittal  
Check # 165566 (\$200)

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